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MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING,

A COMEDY IN FIVE ACTS,

BY

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE,

AS ARRANGED FOR THE STAGE

BY

HENRY IRVING,

AND PRESENTED AT

THE LYCEUM THEATRE,

ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11TH, 1882.

LONDON:
PRINTED AT THE CHISWICK PRESS.
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PRICE ONE SHILLING.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DON PEDRO, Prince of Arragon. .	MR. C. GLENNEY.
DON JOHN, his bastard brother . .	MR. HAVILAND.
CLAUDIO, a young lord of Florence	MR. ALEXANDER.
BENEDICK, a young lord of Padua .	MR. HENRY IRVING.
LEONATO, governor of Messina . .	MR. WENMAN.
ANTONIO, his brother	MR. H. HOWE.
BALTHAZAR, attendant on Don Pedro	MR. J. ROBERTSON.
BORACHIO, CONRADE, followers of Don John	MR. F. TYARS. / MR. HARBURY.
FRIAR FRANCIS	MR. MEAD.
DOGBERRY, VERGES, two city officers . .	MR. S. JOHNSON. / MR. CLIFFORD.
SEACOAL, OATCAKE, watchmen	MR. ARCHER. / MR. BAKER.
A Sexton	MR. CARTER.
A Messenger	MR. HARVEY.
A Boy	MISS K. BROWN.
HERO, daughter to Leonato . . .	MISS W. EMERY.
BEATRICE, niece to Leonato . . .	MISS ELLEN TERRY.
MARGARET, URSULA. gentlewomen attending on Hero .	MISS MILLS. / MISS H. MATHEWS.

Ladies, Gentlemen, Maskers, Pages, Attendants, Musicians, Guards, Watchmen, Soldiers, Servants, &c., &c.

SCENE.—*Messina.*

SYNOPSIS OF SCENERY.

ACT I.

LEONATO'S HOUSE.

ACT II.

SCENE 1. BEFORE LEONATO'S HOUSE.
SCENE 2. HALL IN LEONATO'S HOUSE.

ACT III.

SCENE 1. BEFORE LEONATO'S HOUSE.
SCENE 2. LEONATO'S GARDEN—EVENING.
SCENE 3. LEONATO'S GARDEN—MORNING.
SCENE 4. THE CEDAR WALK.
SCENE 5. A STREET.

ACT IV.

INSIDE OF A CHURCH.

ACT V.

SCENE 1. A PRISON.
SCENE 2. LEONATO'S GARDEN.
SCENE 3. THE MONUMENT OF LEONATO.
SCENE 4. HALL IN LEONATO'S HOUSE.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

ACT I.

SCENE I. Leonato's *House.*

Enter LEONATO *with a* Messenger *and others.*

Leonato.

I LEARN in this letter, that Don Pedro of Arragon comes this night to Messina.

Mess. He is very near by this; he was not three leagues off when I left him.

Leon. How many gentlemen have you lost in this action?

Mess. But few of any sort, and none of name.

Leon. A victory is twice itself, when the achiever brings home full numbers.

Enter BEATRICE, HERO, MARGARET, *and* Ladies.

I find here, that Don Pedro hath bestowed much honour on a young Florentine, called Claudio.

Mess. Much deserved on his part, and equally remembered by Don Pedro: He hath borne himself beyond the promise of his age; doing, in the figure of a lamb, the feats of a lion.

Beat. I pray you is signior Montanto returned from the wars, or no?

Mess. I know none of that name, lady; there was none such in the army of any sort.

Leon. What is he that you ask for, niece?

Hero. My cousin means Signior Benedick of Padua.

Mess. O, he is returned; and as pleasant as ever he was.

Beat. I pray you, how many hath he killed and eaten in these wars? But how many hath he killed? for, indeed, I promised to eat all of his killing.

Leon. Faith, niece, you tax Signior Benedick too much; but he'll be meet with you, I doubt it not.

Mess. He hath done good service, lady, in these wars.

Beat. You had musty victual, and he hath holp to eat it: he is a very valiant trencher-man, he hath an excellent stomach.

Mess. And a good soldier too, lady.

Beat. And a good soldier to a lady;—But what is he to a lord?

Mess. A lord to a lord, a man to a man; stuffed with all honourable virtues.

Beat. It is so, indeed; he is no less than a stuffed man: but for the stuffing,—Well, we are all mortal.

Leon. You must not, sir, mistake my niece: there is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her: they never meet, but there is a skirmish of wit between them.

Beat. Alas! he gets nothing by that. In our last conflict, four of his five wits went halting off, and now is the whole man governed with one: Who is his companion now? He hath every month a new sworn brother.

Mess. Is it possible?

Beat. Very easily possible: he wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat, it ever changes with the next block.

Mess. I see, lady, the gentleman is not in your books.

Beat. No: an he were, I would burn my study.

But, I pray you, who is his companion? Is there no young squarer now, that will make a voyage with him to the devil?

Mess. He is most in the company of the right noble Claudio.

Beat. O Lord! he will hang upon him like a disease: he is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker runs presently mad. God help the noble Claudio! if he have caught the Benedick, it will cost him a thousand pound ere he be cured.

Mess. I will hold friends with you, lady.

Beat. Do, good friend.

Leon. You will never run mad, niece.

Beat. No, not till a hot January.

Mess. Don Pedro is approached.

Enter DON PEDRO, *attended by* DON JOHN, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, CONRADE, BORACHIO, *and others.*

D. Pedro. Good signior Leonato, you are come to meet your trouble: the fashion of the world is to avoid cost, and you encounter it.

Leon. Never came trouble to my house in the likeness of your grace: for trouble being gone, comfort should remain; but, when you depart from me, sorrow abides, and happiness takes his leave.

D. Pedro. You embrace your charge too willingly.—I think, this is your daughter.

Leon. Her mother hath many times told me so.

Bene. Were you in doubt, sir, that you asked her?

Leon. Signior Benedick, no; for then were you a child.

D. Pedro. You have it full, Benedick: we may guess by this what you are, being a man. Truly, the lady fathers herself:—Be happy, lady! for you are like an honourable father.

Bene. If Signior Leonato be her father, she would not have his head on her shoulders for all Messina, as like him as she is.

Beat. I wonder, that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick: nobody marks you.

Bene. What, my dear lady Disdain! are you yet living?

Beat. Is it possible disdain should die, while she hath such meet food to feed it, as signior Benedick? Courtesy itself must convert to disdain, if you come in her presence.

Bene. Then is courtesy a turn-coat:—But it is certain, I am lov'd of all ladies, only you excepted: and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart; for, truly, I love none.

Beat. A dear happiness to women; they would else have been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank Heaven, and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that; I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow, than a man swear he loves me.

Bene. Heaven keep your ladyship still in that mind! so some gentleman or other shall 'scape a predestinate scratched face.

Beat. Scratching could not make it worse, an 'twere such a face as yours were.

Bene. Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

Beat. A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.

Bene. I would, my horse had the speed of your tongue; and so good a continuer: But keep your way o' Heaven's name; I have done.

Beat. You always end with a jade's trick; I know you of old.

D. Pedro. This is the sum of all, Leonato. [*Advancing.*] Signior Claudio, and Signior Benedick,—my dear friend Leonato hath invited you all. I tell him, we shall stay here at the least a month; and he heartily prays, some occasion may detain us longer: I dare swear he is no hypocrite, but prays from his heart.

Leon. If you swear, my lord, you shall not be forsworn. [*To Don John.*] Let me bid you welcome, my lord: being reconciled to the prince your brother, I owe you all duty.

D. John. I thank you: I am not of many words, but I thank you.

Leon. Please it your grace, lead on.

D. Pedro. Your hand, Leonato; we will go together.

[*Exeunt all but* BENEDICK *and* CLAUDIO.

Claud. Benedick, didst thou note the daughter of signior Leonato?

Bene. I noted her not; but I looked on her.

Claud. Is she not a modest young lady?

Bene. Do you question me, as an honest man should do, for my simple true judgment; or would you have me speak after my custom, as being a professed tyrant to their sex?

Claud. No, I pray thee, speak in sober judgment.

Bene. Why, i' faith, methinks she is too low for a high praise, too brown for a fair praise, and too little for a great praise: only this commendation I can afford her; that were she other than she is, she were unhandsome; and being no other but as she is, I do not like her.

Claud. Thou thinkest, I am in sport; I pray thee, tell me truly how thou likest her.

Bene. Would you buy her, that you inquire after her?

Claud. Can the world buy such a jewel?

Bene. Yea, and a case to put it into. But speak you this with a sad brow? or do you play the flouting Jack? Come, in what key shall a man take you?

Claud. In mine eye, she is the sweetest lady that ever I looked on.

Bene. I can see yet without spectacles, and I see no such matter: there's her cousin, an she were not possessed with a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty, as the first of May doth the last of December. But I hope you have no intent to turn husband, have you?

Claud. I would scarce trust myself, though I had sworn the contrary, if Hero would be my wife.

Bene. Is it come to this, i'faith? Shall I never

see a bachelor of threescore again? Go to, i'faith; an thou wilt needs thrust thy neck into a yoke, wear the print of it, and sigh away Sundays. Look, Don Pedro is returned to seek you.

Re-enter DON PEDRO.

D. Pedro. What secret hath held you here, that you followed not to Leonato's?

Bene. I would, your grace would constrain me to tell.

D. Pedro. I charge thee on thy allegiance.

Bene. You hear, Count Claudio: I can be secret as a dumb man, I would have you think so; but on my *allegiance*,—mark you this, on my *allegiance:*—He is in love. With who?—now that is your grace's part.—Mark, how short his answer is:—*With Hero, Leonato's short daughter.*

Claud. If this were so, so were it uttered.

Bene. Like the old tale, my lord: *it is not so, nor 'twas not so;* but, indeed, *Heaven forbid it should be so.*

Claud. If my passion change not shortly, Heaven forbid it should be otherwise.

D. Pedro. Amen, if you love her; for the lady is very well worthy.

Claud. You speak this to fetch me in, my lord.

D. Pedro. By my troth, I speak my thought.

Claud. And, in faith, my lord, I spoke mine.

Bene. And by my two faiths and troths, my lord, I spoke mine.

Claud. That I love her, I feel.

D. Pedro. That she is worthy, I know.

Bene. That I neither feel how she should be loved, nor know how she should be worthy, is the opinion that fire cannot melt out of me; I will die in it at the stake.

D. Pedro. Thou wast ever an obstinate heretick in the despite of beauty.

Claud. And never could maintain his part, but in the force of his will.

Bene. That a woman conceived me, I thank her;

that she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thanks: but that I will have a recheat winded in my forehead, all women shall pardon me: Because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none; and the fine is (for the which I may go the finer), I will live a bachelor.

D. Pedro. I shall see thee, ere I die, look pale with love.

Bene. With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord; not with love: prove, that ever I lose more blood with love, than I will get again with drinking, pick out mine eyes with a ballad-maker's pen, and hang me up at a door, for the sign of blind Cupid.

D. Pedro. Well, if ever thou dost fall from this faith, thou wilt prove a notable argument.

Bene. If I do, hang me in a bottle like a cat, and shoot at me.

D. Pedro. Well, as time shall try:

"*In time the savage bull doth bear the yoke.*"

Bene. The savage bull may; but if ever the sensible Benedick bear it, pluck off the bull's horns, and set them in my forehead: and let me be vilely painted; and in such great letters as they write, *Here is good horse to hire*, let them signify under my sign—*Here you may see Benedick the married man.*

D. Pedro. Nay, if Cupid have not spent all his quiver in Venice, thou wilt quake for this shortly.

Bene. I look for an earthquake too then.

D. Pedro. Well, you will temporize with the hours. In the mean time, good Signior Benedick, repair to Leonato's; commend me to him, and tell him, I will not fail him at supper; for, indeed, he hath made great preparation.

Bene. I have almost matter enough in me for such an embassage: and so I commit you—

Claud. To the tuition of Heaven: From my house, (if I had it)—

D. Pedro. The sixth of July: Your loving friend Benedick.

Bene. Nay, mock not, mock not: The body of your discourse is sometime guarded with fragments, and the guards are but slightly basted on neither: ere you flout old ends any further, examine your conscience, and so I leave you. [*Exit* BENEDICK.

Claud. My liege, your highness now may do me good.

D. Pedro. My love is thine to teach; teach it but how,
And thou shalt see how apt it is to learn
Any hard lesson that may do thee good.

Claud. Hath Leonato any son, my lord!

D. Pedro. No child but Hero, she's his only heir:
Dost thou affect her, Claudio?

Claud. O my lord,
When you went onward on this ended action,
I look'd upon her with a soldier's eye,
That lik'd, but had a rougher task in hand
Than to drive liking to the name of love:
But now I am return'd, and that war-thoughts
Have left their places vacant, in their rooms
Come thronging soft and delicate desires,
All prompting me how fair young Hero is,
Saying, I lik'd her ere I went to wars.—

D. Pedro. Thou wilt be like a lover presently,
And tire the hearer with a book of words:

Enter BORACHIO, *who hides and listens.*

If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it;
And I will break with her, and with her father,
And thou shalt have her: Was't not to this end,
That thou began'st to twist so fine a story?

Claud. How sweetly do you minister to love,
That know love's grief by his complexion!
But lest my liking might too sudden seem,
I would have salv'd it with a longer treatise.

D. Pedro. What need the bridge much broader than the flood?
The fairest grant is the necessity:

Look, what will serve is fit: 'tis once, thou lov'st;
And I will fit thee with the remedy.
I know we shall have revelling to-night;
I will assume thy part in some disguise,
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio;
And in her bosom I'll unclasp my heart,
And take her hearing prisoner with the force
And strong encounter of my amorous tale:
Then, after, to her father will I break;
And, the conclusion is, she shall be thine:
In practice let us put it presently. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. *Before* Leonato's *House.*

Enter DON JOHN *and* CONRADE.

Conrade.

WHAT the good year, my lord! why are you thus out of measure sad? You should hear reason.

D. John. And when I have heard it, what blessing bringeth it?

Con. If not a present remedy, yet a patient sufferance. You have till of late stood out against your brother, and he hath ta'en you newly into his grace; where it is impossible you should take true root, but by the fair weather that you make yourself: it is needful that you frame the season for your own harvest.

D. John. I had rather be a canker in a hedge, than a rose in his grace; and it better fits my blood to be disdained of all, than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any; in this, though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man, it must not be denied but I am a plain-dealing villain. I am trusted with a muzzle, and enfranchised with a clog: therefore I have decreed not to sing in my cage: If I had my mouth, I would bite; if I had my liberty, I would do my liking: in the mean time, let me be that I am, and seek not to alter me.

Con. Can you make no use of your discontent?

D. John. I make all use of it, for I use it only. Who comes here? What news, Borachio?

Enter BORACHIO.

Bora. I came yonder from a great supper; the prince, your brother, is royally entertained by Leonato; and I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage.

D. John. Will it serve for any model to build mischief on? What is he for a fool, that betroths himself to unquietness?

Bora. Marry, it is your brother's right hand.

D. John. Who? the most exquisite Claudio?

Bora. Even he.

D. John. A proper squire! and who, and who? which way looks he?

Bora. Marry, on Hero, the daughter and heir of Leonato.

D. John. A very forward March-chick! How came you to this?

Bora. I heard it agreed upon, that the prince should woo Hero for himself, and having obtained her, give her to count Claudio.

D. John. Come, come, let us thither; this may prove food to my displeasure. That young start-up hath all the glory of my overthrow; if I can cross him any way, I bless myself every way. You are both sure, and will assist me?

Con. To the death, my lord.

D. John. Let us to the great supper. 'Would the cook were of my mind! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE 2. *A Hall in* Leonato's *House.*

Enter LEONATO *and* ANTONIO.

Antonio.

BUT, brother, I can tell you news that you yet dreamed not of. The prince and Claudio were thus overheard by a man of mine: The prince discovered to Claudio, that he loved my niece

your daughter, and meant to acknowledge it this night in a dance; and, if he found her accordant, he meant to take the present time by the top, and instantly break with you of it.

Leon. Hath the fellow any wit, that told you this?

Ant. A good sharp fellow: I will send for him, and question him yourself.

Leon. No, no; we will hold it as a dream, till it appear itself:—but I will acquaint my daughter withal, that she may be the better prepared for an answer, if peradventure this be true.

Enter HERO *and* BEATRICE.

Leon. Was not count John here at supper?

Ant. I saw him not.

Beat. How tartly that gentleman looks! I never can see him, but I am heart-burned an hour after.

Hero. He is of a very melancholy disposition.

Beat. He were an excellent man, that were made just in the mid-way between him and Benedick: the one is too like an image, and says nothing; and the other, too like my lady's eldest son, evermore tattling.

Leon. Then half signior Benedick's tongue in count John's mouth, and half count John's melancholy in signior Benedick's face,—

Beat. With a good leg, and a good foot, uncle, and money enough in his purse, such a man would win any woman in the world,—if he could get her good will.

Leon. By my troth, niece, thou wilt never get thee a husband, if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.

Beat. For the which blessing, I am upon my knees every morning and evening. Lord! I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face; I had rather lie in the woollen.

Leon. You may light upon a husband, that hath no beard.

Beat. What should I do with him? dress him in my apparel, and make him my waiting gentlewoman?

He that hath a beard, is more than a youth; and he that hath no beard, is less than a man; and he that is more than a youth, is not for me; and he that is less than a man, I am not for him.

Ant. [*To* HERO.] Well, niece, I trust, you will be ruled by your father.

Beat. Yes, faith; it is my cousin's duty to make courtesy, and say, *Father, as it please you*:—but yet for all that, cousin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make another courtesy, and say, *Father, as it please me.*

Leon. Well, niece, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.

Beat. Not till God make men of some other metal than earth. Would it not grieve a woman to be overmastered with a piece of valiant dust? to make an account of her life to a clod of wayward marl? No, uncle, I'll none: Adam's sons are my brethren; and truly, I hold it a sin to match in my kindred.

Leon. Daughter, remember what I told you: if the prince do solicit you in that kind, you know your answer.

Beat. The fault will be in the musick, cousin, if you be not woo'd in good time: if the prince be too important, tell him, there is measure in every thing, and so dance out the answer. For, hear me, Hero; Wooing, wedding, and repenting, is as a Scotch jig, a measure, and a cinque-pace: the first suit is hot and hasty, like a Scotch jig, and full as fantastical; the wedding, mannerly-modest, as a measure full of state and ancientry; and then comes repentance, and, with his bad legs, falls into the cinque-pace faster and faster, till he sink into his grave.

Leon. Cousin, you apprehend passing shrewdly.

Beat. I have a good eye, uncle; I can see a church by daylight.

Leon. The revellers are entering.

Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, BALTHAZAR; DON JOHN, BORACHIO, MARGARET, URSULA, *and others, masked. Dance.*

D. Pedro. Lady, will you walk about with your friend?

Hero. So you walk softly, and look sweetly, and say nothing, I am yours for the walk; and, especially, when I walk away.

D. Pedro. With me in your company?

Hero. I may say so, when I please.

D. Pedro. And when please you to say so?

Hero. When I like your favour; for God defend, the lute should be like the case!

D. Pedro. My visor is Philemon's roof; within the house is Jove.

Hero. Why, then your visor should be thatch'd.

D. Pedro. Speak low, if you speak love. [*Takes her aside.*

Urs. I know you well enough; you are Signior Antonio.

Ant. At a word, I am not.

Urs. I know you by the waggling of your head.

Ant. To tell you true, I counterfeit him.

Urs. You could never do him so ill-well, unless you were the very man: Here's his dry hand up and down; you are he, you are he.

Ant. At a word, I am not.

Urs. Come, come; do you think I do not know you by your excellent wit? Can virtue hide itself? Go to, mum, you are he: graces will appear, and there's an end. [*Exeunt.*

Beat. Will you not tell me who told you so?

Bene. No, you shall pardon me.

Beat. Nor will you not tell who you are?

Bene. Not now.

Beat. That I was disdainful,—and that I had my good wit out of the *Hundred merry tales*;—Well, this was Signior Benedick that said so.

Bene. What's he?

Beat. I am sure, you know him well enough.

Bene. Not I, believe me.

Beat. Did he never make you laugh?

Bene. I pray you, what is he?

Beat. Why, he is the prince's jester; a very dull fool; only his gift is in devising impossible slanders: none but libertines delight in him; and the commendation is not in his wit, but in his villany; for he both pleaseth men, and angers them, and then they laugh at him, and beat him.

Bene. When I know the gentleman, I'll tell him what you say.

Beat. Do, do; he'll but break a comparison or two on me; which, peradventure, not marked, or not laughed at, strikes him into melancholy; and then there's a partridge' wing saved, for the fool will eat no supper that night. [*Exeunt.*

Enter DON JOHN, BORACHIO, *and* CLAUDIO.

D. John. Sure, my brother is amorous on Hero, and hath withdrawn her father to break with him about it: The ladies follow her, and but one visor remains.

Bora. And that is Claudio: I know him by his bearing.

D. John. Are not you Signior Benedick?

Claud. You know me well; I am he.

D. John. Signior, you are very near my brother in his love: he is enamoured on Hero; I pray you, dissuade him from her, she is no equal for his birth: you may do the part of an honest man in it.

Claud. How know you he loves her?

D. John. I heard him swear his affection.

Bora. So did I too; and he swore he would marry her to-night.

D. John. Come, let us to the banquet.

[*Exeunt* DON JOHN *and* BORACHIO.

Claud. Thus answer I in name of Benedick,

But hear these ill news with the ears of Claudio.—
'Tis certain so;—the prince woos for himself.
Friendship is constant in all other things,
Save in the office and affairs of love:
Therefore, all hearts in love use their own tongues;
Let every eye negotiate for itself,
And trust no agent: for beauty is a witch,
Against whose charms faith melteth into blood.
This is an accident of hourly proof,
Which I mistrusted not: Farewell therefore, Hero!

Re-enter BENEDICK.

Bene. Count Claudio?

Claud. Yea, the same.

Bene. Come, will you go with me?

Claud. Whither?

Bene. Even to the next willow, about your own business, count. What fashion will you wear the garland of? About your neck, like an usurer's chain? or under your arm, like a lieutenant's scarf? You must wear it one way, for the prince hath got your Hero.

Claud. I wish him joy of her.

Bene. Why, that's spoken like an honest drover; so they sell bullocks. But did you think the prince would have served you thus?

Claud. I pray you, leave me.

Bene. Ho! now you strike like the blind man; 'twas the boy that stole your meat, and you'll beat the post.

Claud. If it will not be, I'll leave you. [*Exit.*

Bene. Alas, poor hurt fowl! Now will he creep into sedges.——But, that my lady Beatrice should know me, and not know me! *The prince's fool!*—Ha! it may be I go under that title, because I am merry.—Yea; but so I am apt to do myself wrong: I am not so reputed: it is the base, the bitter, disposition of Beatrice, that puts the world into her person, and so gives me out. Well, I'll be revenged as I may.

Re-enter DON PEDRO.

D. Pedro. Now, Signior, where's the count; Did you see him?

Bene. Troth, my lord, I have play'd the part of lady Fame. I found him here as melancholy as a lodge in a warren; I told him, and I think I told him true, that your grace had got the good will of this young lady; and I offered him my company to a willow tree, either to make him a garland, as being forsaken, or to bind him up a rod, as being worthy to be whipped.

D. Pedro. To be whipped! What's his fault?

Bene. The flat transgression of a schoolboy; who, being overjoyed with finding a bird's nest, shows it his companion, and he steals it.

D. Pedro. Wilt thou make a trust a transgression? The transgression is in the stealer.

Bene. Yet it had not been amiss the rod had been made, and the garland too; for the garland he might have worn himself; and the rod he might have bestowed on you, who, as I take it, have stol'n his bird's nest.

D. Pedro. I will but teach them to sing, and restore them to the owner.

Bene. If their singing answer your saying, by my faith, you say honestly.

D. Pedro. The lady Beatrice hath a quarrel to you; the gentleman that danced with her told her, she is much wronged by you.

Bene. O, she misused me past the endurance of a block; an oak, but with one green leaf on it, would have answered her; my very visor began to assume life, and scold with her: She told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was the prince's jester: that I was duller than a great thaw; huddling jest upon jest, with such impossible conveyance, upon me, that I stood like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me: She speaks poniards, and every word

stabs. I would not marry her, though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgressed; she would have made Hercules have turned spit; yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too. I would to Heaven, some scholar would conjure her; for, certainly, while she is here, a man may live as quiet in hell as in a sanctuary; and people sin upon purpose, because they would go thither: so, indeed, all disquiet, horror, and perturbation follow her.

D. Pedro. Look, here she comes.

Bene. Will your grace command me any service to the world's end? I will go on the slightest errand now to the Antipodes, that you can devise to send me on; I will fetch you a toothpicker now from the farthest inch of Asia; bring you the length of Prester John's foot; fetch you a hair off the great Cham's beard: do you any embassage to the Pigmies, rather than hold three words' conference with this harpy: You have no employment for me?

D. Pedro. None, but to desire your good company.

Enter BEATRICE, HERO, CLAUDIO, *and* LEONATO.

Bene. O Lord, sir, here's a dish I love not; I cannot endure my lady Tongue. [*Exit.*

D. Pedro. Come, lady, come; you have lost the heart of Signior Benedick.

Beat. Your grace may well say, I have lost it. I have brought count Claudio, whom you sent me to seek.

D. Pedro. Why, how now, count? wherefore are you sad?

Claud. Not sad, my lord.

D. Pedro. How then? Sick?

Claud. Neither, my lord.

Beat. The count is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well: but civil, count; civil as an orange, and something of that jealous complexion.

D. Pedro. I'faith, lady, I think your blazon to be true; though, I'll be sworn, if he be so, his conceit is

false. Here, Claudio, I have wooed in thy name, and fair Hero is won; I have broke with her father, and his good will obtained: name the day of marriage, and God give thee joy!

Leon. Count, take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes: his grace hath made the match, and all grace say Amen to it!

Beat. Speak, count, 'tis your cue.

Claud. Silence is the perfectest herald of joy: I were but little happy, if I could say how much.—Lady, as you are mine, I am yours: I give away myself for you, and dote upon the exchange.

Beat. Speak, cousin; or, if you cannot, stop his mouth with a kiss, and let him not speak neither.

D. Pedro. In faith, lady, you have a merry heart.

Beat. Yea, my lord: I thank it, poor fool, it keeps on the windy side of care:—My cousin tells him in his ear, that he is in her heart.

Claud. And so she doth, cousin.

Beat. Good lord, for alliance!—Thus goes every one to the world but I, and I am sun-burned; I may sit in a corner, and cry, *heigh ho! for a husband.*

D. Pedro. Will you have me, lady?

Beat. No, my lord, unless I might have another for working-days; your grace is too costly to wear every day.—But, I beseech your grace, pardon me: I was born to speak all mirth, and no matter.

D. Pedro. Your silence most offends me, and to be merry best becomes you; for, out of question, you were born in a merry hour.

Beat. No, sure, my lord, my mother cried; but then there was a star danced, and under that was I born.—Cousins, Heaven give you joy!

Leon. Niece, will you look to those things I told you of?

Beat. I cry you mercy, uncle.—By your grace's pardon. [*Exit* BEATRICE.

D. Pedro. By my troth, a pleasant-spirited lady.

Leon. There's little of the melancholy element in

her, my lord: she is never sad, but when she sleeps; and not ever sad then; for I have heard my daughter say, she hath often dreamed of unhappiness, and waked herself with laughing.

D. Pedro. She cannot endure to hear tell of a husband.

Leon. O, by no means; she mocks all her wooers out of suit.

D. Pedro. She were an excellent wife for Benedick.

Leon. O lord, my lord, if they were but a week married, they would talk themselves mad.

D. Pedro. Count Claudio, when mean you to go to church?

Claud. To-morrow, my lord: Time goes on crutches, till love have all his rites.

Leon. Not till Monday, my dear son, which is hence a just seven-night: and a time too brief too, to have all things answer my mind.

D. Pedro. Come, you shake the head at so long a breathing; but, I warrant thee, Claudio, the time shall not go dully by us; I will, in the interim, undertake one of Hercules' labours; which is, to bring Signior Benedick and the lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection, the one with the other. I would fain have it a match; and I doubt not but to fashion it, if you three will but minister such assistance as I shall give you direction.

Leon. My lord, I am for you, though it cost me ten nights' watchings.

Claud. And I, my lord.

D. Pedro. And you too, gentle Hero?

Hero. I will do any modest office, my lord, to help my cousin to a good husband.

D. Pedro. And Benedick is not the unhopefullest husband that I know. Thus far can I praise him; he is of a noble strain, of approved valour, and confirmed honesty. I will teach you how to humour your cousin, that she shall fall in love with Benedick:—and I, with your two helps, will so practise on Benedick, that, in despite of his quick wit and his queasy stomach, he shall

fall in love with Beatrice. If we can do this, Cupid is no longer an archer; his glory shall be ours, for we are the only love-gods. Go in with me, and I will tell you my drift. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I. *Before* Leonato's *House.*

Enter DON JOHN *and* BORACHIO.

D. John.

IT is so: the count Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato.

Bora. Yea, my lord; but I can cross it.

D. John. Any bar, any cross, any impediment will be medicinable to me: I am sick in displeasure to him; and whatsoever comes athwart his affection, ranges evenly with mine. How canst thou cross this marriage?

Bora. Not honestly, my lord; but so covertly that no dishonesty shall appear in me.

D. John. Show me briefly how.

Bora. I think, I told your lordship, a year since, how much I am in the favour of Margaret, the waiting-gentlewoman to Hero.

D. John. I remember.

Bora. I can, at any unseasonable instant of the night, appoint her to look out at her lady's chamber-window.

D. John. What life is in that to be the death of this marriage?

Bora. The poison of that lies in you to temper. Go you to the prince your brother; spare not to tell him, that he hath wronged his honour in marrying the renowned Claudio (whose estimation do you mightily hold up) to such a one as Hero.

D. John. What proof shall I make of that?

Bora. Proof enough to misuse the prince, to vex Claudio, to undo Hero, and kill Leonato. Find me a meet hour to draw Don Pedro and the count Claudio alone: tell them, that you know that Hero loves me; —that you have discovered thus. They will scarcely believe this without trial: offer them instances; which shall bear no less likelihood, than to see me at her chamber-window; hear me call Margaret, Hero; hear Margaret term me Borachio; and bring them to see this, the very night before the intended wedding; for, in the mean time I will so fashion the matter, that Hero shall be absent; and there shall appear such seeming truth of Hero's disloyalty, that jealousy shall be call'd assurance, and all the preparation overthrown.

D. John. Grow this to what adverse issue it can, I will put it in practice: Be cunning in the working this, and thy fee is a thousand ducats.

Bora. Be you constant in the accusation, and my cunning shall not shame me.

D. John. I will presently go learn their day of marriage. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE 2. Leonato's *Garden. Evening.*

Enter BENEDICK, *a* Boy *following.*

Benedick.

BOY,—

Boy. Signior.

Bene. In my chamber-window lies a book; bring it hither to me in the orchard.

Boy. I am here, already, sir.

Bene. I know that; but I would have thee hence, and here again. [*Exit Boy.*]—I do much wonder, that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will, after he hath laughed at such shallow follies in others, become the

argument of his own scorn, by falling in love: and such a man is Claudio. I have known, when there was no musick with him but the drum and the fife; and now had he rather hear the tabor and the pipe: I have known, when he would have walked ten mile afoot, to see a good armour; and now will he lie ten nights awake, carving the fashion of a new doublet. He was wont to speak plain, and to the purpose, like an honest man, and a soldier; and now is he turned orthographer; his words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes. May I be so converted, and see with these eyes? I cannot tell; I think not: I will not be sworn, but love may transform me to an oyster: but I'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster of me, he shall never make me such a fool. One woman is fair; yet I am well: another is wise; yet I am well: another virtuous; yet I am well: but till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain; wise, or I'll none; fair, or I'll never look on her; mild, or come not near me; noble, or not I for an angel; of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please Heaven. Ha! the prince and monsieur Love! I will hide me in the arbour.

[*Withdraws behind the trees.*

Enter DON PEDRO, LEONATO, *and* CLAUDIO.

D. Pedro. Come, shall we hear this musick?

Claud. Yea, my good lord:—How still the evening is,
As hush'd on purpose to grace harmony!

D. Pedro. [*Aside.*] See you where Benedick hath hid himself?

Claud. [*Aside.*] O, very well, my lord.

Enter BALTHAZAR, *with musick.*

D. Pedro. Come, Balthazar, we'll hear that song again.

Balth. O good my lord, tax not so bad a voice
To slander musick any more than once.
D. Pedro. It is the witness still of excellency,
To put a strange face on his own perfection:—
I pray thee, sing, and let me woo no more. [*Musick.*
Bene. Now, *Divine air!* now is his soul ravish'd! Well, a horn for my money, when all's done.

BALTHAZAR *sings.*

I.

Balth. *Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,*
Men were deceivers ever;
One foot in sea, and one on shore;
To one thing constant never:
Then sigh not so,
But let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny;
Converting all your sounds of woe
Into, Hey nonny, nonny.

II.

Sing no more ditties, sing no mo
Of dumps so dull and heavy;
The fraud of men was ever so,
Since summer first was leavy:
Then sigh not so, &c.

D. Pedro. By my troth, a good song.
Balth. And an ill singer, my lord.
D. Pedro. Ha? no; no, faith.
Bene. [*Aside.*] An he had been a dog, that should have howled thus, they would have hanged him.
D. Pedro. [*To Claudio.*] Yea, marry; Dost thou hear Balthazar? I pray thee, get us some excellent musick; for to-morrow night we would have it at the lady Hero's chamber window.
Balth. The best I can, my lord.
D. Pedro. Do so: farewell. [*Exeunt* BALTHAZAR *and musick.*] Come hither, Leonato: What was it

you told me of to-day? that your niece Beatrice was in love with Signior Benedick?

Claud. O, ay: [*Aside to Don Pedro.*] Stalk on, stalk on; the fowl sits. [*Aloud.*] I did never think that lady would have loved any man.

Leon. No, nor I neither; but most wonderful, that she should so dote on signior Benedick, whom she hath in all outward behaviours seemed ever to abhor.

Bene. [*Aside.*] Is't possible? Sits the wind in that corner?

Leon. By my troth, my lord, I cannot tell what to think of it; but that she loves him with an enraged affection,—it is past the infinite of thought.

D. Pedro. May be, she doth but counterfeit.

Claud. 'Faith, like enough.

Leon. O Heaven! *counterfeit!* There never was counterfeit of passion came so near the life of passion, as she discovers it.

D. Pedro. Why, what effects of passion shows she?

Claud. [*Aside.*] Bait the hook well; this fish will bite.

Leon. What effects, my lord! She will sit you,— You heard my daughter tell you how.

Claud. She did, indeed.

D. Pedro. How, how, I pray you? You amaze me: I would have thought her spirit had been invincible against all assaults of affection.

Leon. I would have sworn it had, my lord; especially against Benedick.

Bene. [*Aside.*] I should think this a gull, but that the white-bearded fellow speaks it: knavery cannot, sure, hide himself in such reverence.

Claud. [*Aside.*] He hath ta'en the infection; hold it up.

D. Pedro. Hath she made her affection known to Benedick?

Leon. No; and swears she never will: that's her torment.

Claud. 'Tis true, indeed; so your daughter says.

Leon. My daughter says the ecstasy hath so much

overborne her, that she is sometime afraid she will do a desperate outrage to herself.

D. Pedro. It were good, that Benedick knew of it by some other, if she will not discover it.

Claud. To what end? He would but make a sport of it, and torment the poor lady worse.

D. Pedro. An he should, it were an alms-deed to hang him. She's an excellent sweet lady.

Claud. And she is exceeding wise.

D. Pedro. In every thing but in loving Benedick. I pray you, tell Benedick of it, and hear what he will say.

Leon. Were it good, think you?

Claud. Hero thinks surely, she will die: for she says, she will die if he love her not; and she will die ere she makes her love known; and she will die if he woo her, rather than she will 'bate one breath of her accustomed crossness.

D. Pedro. She doth well: if she should make tender of her love, 'tis very possible he'll scorn it; for the man, as you know all, hath a contemptible spirit. Well, I am sorry for your niece; Shall we go seek Benedick, and tell him of her love?

Claud. Never tell him, my lord; let her wear it out with good counsel.

Leon. Nay, that's impossible; she may wear her heart out first.

D. Pedro. Well, we'll hear further of it by your daughter; let it cool the while. I love Benedick well; and I could wish he would modestly examine himself, to see how much he is unworthy so good a lady.

Leon. My lord, will you walk? dinner is ready.

Claud. [*Aside.*] If he do not dote on her upon this, I will never trust my expectation.

D. Pedro. [*Aside.*] Let there be the same net spread for her; and that must your daughter and her gentlewomen carry. The sport will be, when they hold one an opinion of another's dotage, and no such matter; that's the scene that I would see, which will

be merely a dumb show. Let us send her to call him in to dinner.

[*Exeunt* DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, *and* LEONATO.

BENEDICK *advancing from the Arbour.*

Bene. This can be no trick: The conference was sadly borne.—They have the truth of this from Hero. They seem to pity the lady; it seems, her affections have their full bent. Love me! why, it must be requited. I hear how I am censured: they say, I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive the love come from her; they say too, that she will rather die than give any sign of affection.—I did never think to marry:—I must not seem proud:—Happy are they that hear their detractions, and can put them to mending. They say, the lady is fair; 'tis a truth, I can bear them witness: and virtuous;—'tis so, I cannot reprove it; and wise, but for loving me:—By my troth, it is no addition to her wit;—nor no great argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her. I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have railed so long against marriage:—But doth not the appetite alter? A man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age: Shall quips, and sentences, and these paper bullets of the brain, awe a man from the career of his humour? No: The world must be peopled! When I said, I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married.—Here comes Beatrice: By this day, she's a fair lady: I do spy some marks of love in her.

Enter BEATRICE.

Beat. Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

Bene. Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

Beat. I took no more pains for those thanks than

you take pains to thank me; if it had been painful, I would not have come.

Bene. You take pleasure then in the message?

Beat. Yea, just so much as you may take upon a knife's point, and choke a daw withal:—You have no stomach, signiór; fare you well. [*Exit.*

Bene. Ha! *Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner*—there's a double meaning in that. *I took no more pains for those thanks than you took pains to thank me*—that's as much as to say, Any pains that I take for you is as easy as thanks:—If I do not take pity of her, I am a villain; if I do not love her, I am a Jew: I will go get her picture. [*Exit.*

SCENE 3. Leonato's *Garden. Morning.*

MARGARET *discovered. Enter* HERO *and* URSULA.

Hero.

GOOD Margaret, run thee into the parlour;
There shalt thou find my cousin Beatrice
Proposing with the Prince and Claudio:
Whisper her ear, and tell her, I and Ursula
Walk in the orchard, and our whole discourse
Is all of her; say, that thou overheard'st us;
And bid her steal into the pleached bower,
To listen our propose. This is thy office,
Bear thee well in it, and leave us alone.

Marg. I'll make her come, I warrant you, presently. [*Exit.*

Hero. Now, Ursula, when Beatrice doth come,
Our talk must only be of Benedick:
When I do name him, let it be thy part
To praise him more than ever man did merit:
My talk to thee must be, how Benedick
Is sick in love with Beatrice.
Now begin;

Enter BEATRICE, *behind.*

[*Aside.*] For look where Beatrice, like a lapwing, runs
Close by the ground, to hear our conference.
Urs. [*Aside.*] The pleasant'st angling is to see the fish
Cut with their golden oars the silver stream,
And greedily devour the treacherous bait:
So angle we for Beatrice; who even now
Is couchèd in the woodbine coverture:
Fear you not my part of the dialogue.
Hero. [*Aside.*] Then go we near her, that her ear lose nothing
Of the false sweet bait, that we lay for it.—
[*They advance to the Bower.*
[*Aloud.*] No, truly, Ursula, she is too disdainful;
I know her spirits are as coy and wild
As haggards of the rock.
Urs. But are you sure,
That Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely?
Hero. So says the prince, and my new-trothed lord.
Urs. And did they bid you tell her of it, madam?
Hero. They did entreat me to acquaint her of it;
But I persuaded them, if they lov'd Benedick,
To wish him wrestle with affection,
And never to let Beatrice know of it.
Urs. Why did you so?
Hero. I know, he doth deserve
As much as may be yielded to a man:
But nature never fram'd a woman's heart
Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice:
Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,
Misprising what they look on; and her wit
Values itself so highly, that to her
All matter else seems weak. She cannot love,
Nor take no shape nor project of affection,
She is so self-endeared.
Urs. Sure, I think so;
And therefore, certainly, it were not good
She knew his love, lest she make sport at it.

Hero. But who dare tell her so? If I should speak,
She'd mock me into air; O, she would laugh me
Out of myself, press me to death with wit.
Therefore let Benedick, like cover'd fire,
Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly:
It were a better death than die with mocks;
Which is as bad as die with tickling.

Urs. Yet tell her of it; hear what she will say.

Hero. No; rather I will go to Benedick,
And counsel him to fight against his passion:
And, truly, I'll devise some honest slanders
To stain my cousin with: One doth not know,
How much an ill word may empoison liking.

Urs. O, do not do your cousin such a wrong.
She cannot be so much without true judgment,
(Having so swift and excellent a wit,
As she is priz'd to have), as to refuse
So rare a gentleman as Signior Benedick.

Hero. He is the only man of Italy,
Always excepted my dear Claudio.

Urs. I pray you, be not angry with me, madam,
Speaking my fancy; Signior Benedick,
For shape, for bearing, argument, and valour,
Goes foremost in report through Italy.

Hero. Indeed, he hath an excellent good name.

Urs. His excellence did earn it, ere he had it.—
When are you married, madam?

Hero. Why, every day to-morrow. Come, go in:
I'll show thee some attires; and have thy counsel,
Which is the best to furnish me to-morrow.

Urs. [*Aside.*] She's lim'd I warrant you; we have caught her, madam,

Hero. [*Aside.*] If it prove so, then loving goes by haps:
Some Cupid kills with arrows, some with traps.

[*Exeunt* HERO *and* URSULA.

BEATRICE *advances.*

Beat. What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true?
Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much?

Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride, adieu!
No glory lives behind the back of such.
And, Benedick, love on, I will requite thee;
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand;
If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee
To bind our loves up in a holy band:
For others say, thou dost deserve; and I
Believe it better than reportingly. [*Exit.*

Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, LEONATO, *and* BENEDICK.

D. Pedro. I do but stay till your marriage be consummate, and then go I toward Arragon.

Claud. I'll bring you thither, my lord, if you'll vouchsafe me.

D. Pedro. Nay, that would be as great a soil in the new gloss of your marriage, as to show a child his new coat, and forbid him to wear it. I will only be bold with Benedick for his company: for, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, he is all mirth; he hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bow-string, and the little hangman dare not shoot at him: he hath a heart as sound as a bell, and his tongue is the clapper; for what his heart thinks, his tongue speaks.

Bene. Gallants, I am not as I have been.

Leon. So say I; methinks you are sadder.

Claud. I hope, he be in love.

D. Pedro. Hang him, truant; there's no true drop of blood in him, to be truly touch'd with love: if he be sad, he wants money.

Bene. I have the tooth-ache.

D. Pedro. Draw it.

Bene. Hang it!

Claud. You must hang it first, and draw it afterwards.

D. Pedro. What! sigh for the tooth-ache?

Leon. Where is but a humour, or a worm?

Bene. Well, every one can master a grief, but he that has it.

Claud. Yet say I, he is in love.

Don Pedro. There is no appearance of fancy in him, unless it be a fancy that he hath strange disguises; as, to be a Dutchman to-day, a Frenchman to-morrow.

Claud. If he be not in love with some woman, there is no believing old signs: he brushes his hat o' mornings; What should that bode?

D. Pedro. Hath any man seen him at the barber's?

Claud. No, but the barber's man hath been seen with him; and the old ornament of his cheek hath already stuffed tennis-balls.

Leon. Indeed, he looks younger than he did, by the loss of a beard.

D. Pedro. Nay, a' rubs himself with civet: Can you smell him out by that?

Claud. That's as much as to say, the sweet youth's in love.

D. Pedro. The greatest note of it is his melancholy.

Claud. Nay, but his jesting spirit; which is now crept into a lutestring.

D. Pedro. Indeed, that tells a heavy tale for him: Conclude, conclude, he is in love.

Claud. Nay, but I know who loves him.

D. Pedro. That would I know too; I warrant, one that knows him not.

Claud. Yes, and his ill conditions; and, in despite of all, dies for him.

D. Pedro. She shall be buried with her face upwards.

Bene. Yet is this no charm for the tooth-ache.—Old Signior, walk aside with me: I have studied eight or nine wise words to speak to you, which these hobby-horses must not hear.

[*Exeunt* BENEDICK *and* LEONATO.

D. Pedro. For my life, to break with him about Beatrice.

Claud. 'Tis even so: Hero and Margaret have by this played their parts with Beatrice; and then the two bears will not bite one another when they meet.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE 4. *Another part of the Garden.*

Enter DON JOHN, *meeting* DON PEDRO *and* CLAUDIO.

D. John.

MY lord and brother, Heaven save you.

D. Pedro. Good den, brother.

D. John. If your leisure served, I would speak with you.

D. Pedro. In private?

D. John. If it please you:—yet Count Claudio may hear; for what I would speak of concerns him.

D. Pedro. What's the matter?

D. John. [*To* CLAUDIO.] Means your lordship to be married to-morrow?

D. Pedro. You know, he does.

D. John. I know not that, when he knows what I know.

Claud. If there be any impediment, I pray you discover it.

D. John. You may think I love you not; let that appear hereafter, and aim better at me by that I now will manifest. For my brother, I think, he holds you well; and in dearness of heart hath holp to effect your ensuing marriage: surely, suit ill spent, and labour ill bestowed!

D. Pedro. Why, what's the matter?

D. John. I came hither to tell you; and, circumstances shortened, (for she hath been too long a talking of,) the lady is disloyal.

Claud. Who? Hero?

D. John. Even she; Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero.

Claud. Disloyal?

D. John. The word is too good to paint out her

wickedness; I could say, she were worse; think you of a worse title, and I will fit her to it. Wonder not till further warrant: go but with me to-night, you shall see her chamber-window entered; even the night before her wedding-day: if you love her then, to-morrow wed her: but it would better fit your honour to change your mind.

Claud. May this be so?

D. Pedro. I will not think it.

D. John. If you dare not trust that you see, confess not that you know. If you will follow me, I will show you enough; and when you have seen more, and heard more, proceed accordingly.

Claud. If I see any thing to-night why I should not marry her to-morrow; in the congregation, where I should wed, there will I shame her.

D. Pedro. And as I wooed for thee to obtain her, I will join with thee to disgrace her.

D. John. I will disparage her no farther, till you are my witnesses: bear it coldly but till midnight, and let the issue show itself.

D. Pedro. O day untowardly turned!

Claud. O mischief strangely thwarting!

D. John. O plague right well prevented!

So will you say, when you have seen the sequel.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE 5. *A Street.*

Enter DOGBERRY *and* VERGES, SEACOAL, OATCAKE, *and* Watchmen.

Dogb.

ARE you good men and true?

Verg. Yea, or else it were pity but they should suffer salvation, body and soul.

Dogb. Nay, that were a punishment too good for

them, if they should have any allegiance in them, being chosen for the prince's watch.

Verg. Well, give them their charge, neighbour Dogberry.

Dogb. First, who think you the most desartless man to be constable?

Verges. Hugh Oatcake, sir, or George Seacoal; for they can write and read.

Dogb. Come hither, neighbour Seacoal. You are thought here to be the most senseless and fit man for the constable of the watch; therefore bear you the lantern. This is your charge: You shall comprehend all vagrom men: you are to bid any man stand, in the prince's name.

Sea. How if a' will not stand?

Dogb. Why then, take no note of him, but let him go; and presently call the rest of the watch together, and thank Heaven you are rid of a knave.

Verg. If he will not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the prince's subjects.

Dogb. True, and they are to meddle with none but the prince's subjects.—You shall also make no noise in the streets; for, for the watch to babble and talk, is most tolerable and not to be endured.

Sea. We will rather sleep than talk; we know what belongs to a watch.

Dogb. Why, you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman; for I cannot see how sleeping should offend; only, have a care that your bills be not stolen:—Well, you are to call at all the alehouses, and bid those that are drunk get them to bed.

Sea. How if they will not?

Dogb. Why then, let them alone till they are sober; if they make you not then the better answer, you may say, they are not the men you took them for.

Sea. Well, sir.

Dogb. If you meet a thief, you may suspect him, by virtue of your office, to be no true man: and, for such

kind of men, the less you meddle or make with them, why, the more is for your honesty.

Sea. If we know him to be a thief, shall we not lay hands on him?

Dogb. Truly, by your office, you may; but, I think, they that touch pitch will be defiled: the most peaceable way for you, if you do take a thief, is, to let him show himself what he is, and steal out of your company.

Verg. You have been always called a merciful man, partner.

Dogb. Truly, I would not hang a dog by my will; much more a man, who hath any honesty in him.

Verg. If you hear a child cry in the night, you must call to the nurse, and bid her still it.

Sea. How if the nurse be asleep, and will not hear us?

Dogb. Why then, depart in peace, and let the child wake her with crying: for the ewe that will not hear her lamb when it baes, will never answer a calf when he bleats.

Verg. 'Tis very true.

Dogb. This is the end of the charge. Masters, good night: an there be any matter of weight chances, call up me. Keep your fellows' counsels and your own, and good night.—Come, neighbour.

[*Exeunt* DOGBERRY *and* VERGES.

Sea. Well, masters, we hear our charge: let us go sit here upon the church-bench till two, and then all to-bed.

Re-enter DOGBERRY *and* VERGES.

Dogb. One word more, honest neighbours: I pray you, watch about Signior Leonato's door; for the wedding being there to-morrow, there is a great coil to-night: Adieu, be vigitant, I beseech you.

[*Exeunt* DOGBERRY *and* VERGES.

Bora. [*Without.*] What! Conrade!—
Watch. [*Aside.*] Peace, stir not
Bora. [*Without.*] Conrade, I say!

Enter BORACHIO *and* CONRADE.

Con. Here, man, I am at thy elbow. And now forward with thy tale.

Bora. Stand thee close then under this pent house, for it drizzles rain; and I will, like a true drunkard, utter all to thee.

Watch. [*Aside.*] Some treason, masters; yet stand close.

Bora. Therefore know, I have earned of Don John a thousand ducats.

Con. Is it possible that any villainy should be so dear?

Bora. Didst thou not hear somebody?

Con. No; 'twas the vane on the house.

Bora. Well know, that I have to-night wooed Margaret, the lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero; she leans me out at her mistress' chamber-window, bids me a thousand times good night.—I tell this tale vilely:—I should first tell thee, how the Prince, Claudio, and my master, planted, and placed, possessed by my master Don John, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

Con. And thought they, Margaret was Hero?

Bora. Two of them did, the Prince and Claudio; but the devil my master knew she was Margaret; and partly by his oaths, which first possessed them, partly by the dark night, which did deceive them, but chiefly by my villainy, which did confirm any slander that Don John had made, away went Claudio enraged; swore he would meet her as he was appointed, next morning at the temple, and there, be-

fore the whole congregation, shame her with what he saw over-night, and send her home again without a husband.

Sea. We charge you in the prince's name, stand!

Oat. Call up the right master constable.

Sea. Never speak: we charge you, let us obey you to go with us.

[CONRADE *and* BORACHIO *are secured.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *The Inside of a Church.*

Enter DON PEDRO, DON JOHN, LEONATO, FRIAR, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, HERO, *and* BEATRICE, *&c.*

Friar.

YOU come hither, my lord, to marry this lady?

Claud. No.

Leon. To be married to her, friar; you come to marry her

Friar. Lady, you come hither to be married to this count?

Hero. I do.

Friar. If either of you know any inward impediment why you should not be conjoined, I charge you, on your souls, to utter it.

Claud. Know you any, Hero?

Hero. None, my lord.

Friar. Know you any, count?

Leon. I dare make his answer, none.

Claud. O, what men dare do! what men may do! what men daily do! not knowing what they do!

Bene. How now! Interjections?

Claud. Stand thee by, friar.—Father, by your leave!

Will you with free and unconstrained soul
Give me this maid, your daughter?

Leon. As freely, son, as Heaven did give her me.

Claud. And what have I to give you back, whose worth

May counterpoise this rich and precious gift?
D. Pedro. Nothing, unless you render her again.
Claud. Sweet prince, you learn me noble thankfulness.—
There, Leonato, take her back again;
She's but the sign and semblance of her honour.—
Behold, how like a maid she blushes here:
O, what authority, and show of truth
Can cunning sin cover itself withal!
Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.
Leon. What do you mean, my lord?
Claud. Not to be married,
Not to knit my soul to an approved wanton.
Leon. Dear my lord, if you, in your own proof
Have vanquish'd the resistance of her youth,——
Claud. No, Leonato,
I never tempted her with word too large;
But, as a brother to his sister, show'd
Bashful sincerity, and comely love.
Hero. And seem'd I ever otherwise to you?
Claud. Out on thy seeming! I will write against it:
You seem to me as Dian in her orb;
As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown!
Hero. Is my lord well, that he doth speak so wide?
Leon. Sweet prince, why speak not you?
D. Pedro. What should I speak?
I stand dishonour'd, that have gone about
To link my dear friend to a wanton here.
Leon. Are these things spoken? or do I but dream?
D. John. Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.
Hero. True! O God!
Claud. Leonato, stand I here?
Is this the prince? Is this the prince's brother?
Is this face Hero's? Are our eyes our own?
Leon. All this is so; But what of this, my lord?
Claud. Let me but move one question to your daughter;
And, by that fatherly and kindly power

That you have in her, bid her answer truly.
Leon. I charge thee do so, as thou art my child.
Hero. O God, defend me! how am I beset!—
What kind of catechizing call you this?
Claud. To make you answer truly to your name.
Hero. Is it not Hero? Who can blot that name
With any just reproach?
Claud. Marry, that can Hero;
Hero itself can blot out Hero's virtue.
What man was he talk'd with you yesternight
Out at your window, betwixt twelve and one?
Now, if you are a maid, answer to this.
Hero. I talk'd with no man at that hour.
D. Pedro. Leonato,
I am sorry you must hear. Upon mine honour,
Myself, my brother, and this grievèd count,
Did see her, hear her, at that hour last night,
Talk with a ruffian at her chamber-window.
Claud. O Hero! what a Hero hadst thou been,
If half thy outward graces had been placed
About thy thoughts, and counsels of thy heart!
But, fare thee well, most foul, most fair! farewell,
For thee I'll lock up all the gates of love,
And on my eyelids shall conjecture hang,
To turn all beauty into thoughts of harm,
And never shall it more be gracious. [HERO *swoons.*
[*Exeunt* DON PEDRO, DON JOHN, CLAUDIO, *&c.*
Beat. Why, how now, cousin? wherefore sink you down?
Bene. How doth the lady?
Beat. Dead, I think;—help, uncle;—
Hero! why, Hero!—Uncle!—Signior Benedick!—friar!
Leon. Hath no man's dagger here a point for me?
Beat. How now, cousin Hero?
Friar. Have comfort, lady.
Leon. Dost thou look up?
Friar. Yea; Wherefore should she not?

Leon. Wherefore? Why, doth not every earthly thing
Cry shame upon her? Could she here deny
The story that is printed in her blood?—
Do not live, Hero; do not ope thine eyes:
For did I think thou wouldst not quickly die,
Myself would, on the rearward of reproaches,
Strike at thy life. Griev'd I, I had but one?
Chid I for that at frugal nature's frame?
O, one too much by thee!—O, she is fallen
Into a pit of ink, that the wide sea
Hath drops too few to wash her clean again!
Bene. Sir, sir, be patient:
For my part, I am so attir'd in wonder
I know not what to say.
Beat. O, on my soul, my cousin is belied!
Bene. Lady, were you her bedfellow last night?
Beat. No, truly, not: although, until last night,
I have this twelvemonth been her bedfellow.
Leon. Confirm'd, confirm'd! O, that is stronger made,
Which was before barr'd up with ribs of iron!
Would the two princes lie? and Claudio lie?
Who lov'd her so, that, speaking of her foulness,
Wash'd it with tears? Hence! from her; let her die.
Friar. Hear me a little;
For I have only silent been so long,
And given way unto this cross of fortune,
By noting of the lady: I have mark'd
A thousand blushing apparitions start
Into her face; a thousand innocent shames
In angel whiteness beat away those blushes;
And in her eye there hath appear'd a fire,
To burn the errors that these princes hold
Against her maiden truth.—Call me a fool;
Trust not my reading, nor my observations,
Which with experimental seal doth warrant
The tenour of my book; trust not my age,
My reverend calling, nor divinity,

If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here
Under some blighting error.
Leon. Friar, it cannot be:
Why seek'st thou then to cover with excuse
That which appears in proper nakedness?
Friar. Lady, what man is he you are accus'd of?
Hero. They know, that do accuse me; I know none.
If I know more of any man alive,
Than that which maiden modesty doth warrant,
Let all my sins lack mercy!—O my father,
Prove you that any man with me convers'd
At hours unmeet, or that I yesternight
Maintain'd the change of words with any creature,
Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death.
Friar. There is some strange misprision in the princes.
Bene. Two of them have the very bent of honour;
And if their wisdoms be misled in this,
The practice of it lies in John the bastard,
Whose spirits toil in frame of villainies.
Leon. I know not: If they speak but truth of her,
These hands shall tear her: if they wrong her honour,
The proudest of them shall well hear of it.
Time hath not yet so dried this blood of mine,
Nor age so eat up my invention,
Nor fortune made such havock of my means,
Nor my bad life reft me so much of friends,
But they shall find, awak'd in such a cause,
Both strength of limb, and policy of mind,
Ability in means, and choice of friends,
To quit me of them throughly.
Friar. Pause a while,
And let my counsel sway you in this case.
Your daughter here the princes left for dead;
Let her awhile be secretly kept in,
And publish it, that she is dead indeed.
Leon. What shall become of this? What will this do?
Friar. Marry, this well carried, shall on her behalf
Change slander to remorse; that is some good:

She dying, as it must be so maintain'd,
Upon the instant that she was accus'd,
Shall be lamented, pitied, and excus'd,
Of every hearer:
When he shall hear she died upon his words
The idea of her life shall sweetly creep
Into his study of imagination;
And every lovely organ of her life
Shall come apparell'd in more precious habit,
More moving-delicate, and full of life,
Into the eye and prospect of his soul,
Than when she liv'd indeed:—then shall he mourn,
And wish he had not so accusèd her;
No, though he thought his accusation true.

Bene. Signior Leonato, let the friar advise you:
And though, you know, my inwardness and love
Is very much unto the prince and Claudio,
Yet, by mine honour, I will deal in this
As secretly, and justly, as your soul
Should with your body.

Leon. Being that I flow in grief,
The smallest twine may lead me.

Friar. 'Tis well consented; presently away;
For to strange sores strangely they strain the cure.—
Come, lady, die to live: this wedding day,
Perhaps, is but prolong'd; have patience, and endure.

[*Exeunt* Friar, HERO, *and* LEONATO.

Bene. Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?

Beat. Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

Bene. I will not desire that.

Beat. You have no reason, I do it freely.

Bene. Surely, I do believe your fair cousin is wrong'd.

Beat. Ah, how much might the man deserve of me, that would right her!

Bene. Is there any way to show such friendship?

Beat. A very even way, but no such friend.

Bene. May a man do it?

Beat. It is a man's office, but not yours.

Bene. I do love nothing in the world so well as you; Is not that strange?

Beat. As strange as the thing I know not: It were as possible for me to say, I loved nothing so well as you: but believe me not; and yet I lie not; I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing:—I am sorry for my cousin.

Bene. By my sword, Beatrice, thou lovest me.

Beat. Do not swear by it, and eat it.

Bene. I will swear by it, that you love me; and I will make him eat it, that says, I love not you.

Beat. Will you not eat your word?

Bene. With no sauce that can be devised to it: I protest, I love thee.

Beat. Why then, Heaven forgive me!

Bene. What offence, sweet Beatrice?

Beat. You have staid me in a happy hour; I was about to protest, I loved you.

Bene. And do it with all thy heart.

Beat. I love you with so much of my heart, that none is left to protest.

Bene. Come, bid me do any thing for thee.

Beat. Kill Claudio.

Bene. Ha! not for the wide world.

Beat. You kill me to deny it: Farewell.

Bene. Tarry, sweet Beatrice.

Beat. I am gone, though I am here:—There is no love in you:—Nay, I pray you, let me go.

Bene. Beatrice,—

Beat. In faith, I will go.

Bene. We'll be friends first.

Beat. You dare easier be friends with me, than fight with mine enemy.

Bene. Is Claudio thine enemy?

Beat. Is he not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman? —O, that I were a man!—What! bear her in hand

until they come to take hands; and then with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancour,—O God, that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market-place.

Bene. Hear me, Beatrice;—

Beat. Talk with a man out at a window?—a proper saying!

Bene. Nay but, Beatrice;—

Beat. Sweet Hero!—she is wronged, she is slandered, she is undone.

Bene. Beat—

Beat. Princes, and Counties! Surely, a princely testimony, a goodly count, Count-Confect; a sweet gallant, surely! O that I were a man for his sake! or that I had any friend would be a man for my sake! But manhood is melted into courtesies, valour into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and trim ones too: he is now as valiant as Hercules that only tells a lie, and swears it.—I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

Bene. Tarry, good Beatrice: By this hand, I love thee.

Beat. Use it for my love some other way than swearing by it.

Bene. Think you in your soul the count Claudio hath wronged Hero?

Beat. Yea, as sure as I have a thought, or a soul.

Bene. Enough, I am engaged, I will challenge him; I will kiss your hand, and so leave you: By this hand, Claudio shall render me a dear account: As you hear of me, so think of me. Go, comfort your cousin; I must say, she is dead; and so, farewell.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I. *A Prison.*

Enter DOGBERRY, VERGES, *and* Sexton, *to the* Watch.

Dogberry.

IS our whole dissembly appeared?

Verg. O, a stool and a cushion for the sexton!

Sexton. Which be the malefactors?

Dogb. Marry, that am I and my partner.

Verg. Nay, that's certain; we have the exhibition to examine.

Sexton. But which are the offenders that are to be examined? let them come before master constable.

Dogb. Yea, marry, let them come before me.—

Enter CONRADE *and* BORACHIO.

What is your name, friend?

Bora. Borachio.

Dogb. Pray write down — *Borachio.*—— Yours, sirrah?

Con. I am a gentleman, sir, and my name is Conrade.

Dogb. Write down—master gentleman *Conrade.*—Masters, do you serve Heaven?

Con. Bora. Yea, sir, we hope.

Dogb. Write down—that they *hope* they serve Heaven:—and write *Heaven* first: for Heaven defend but Heaven should go before such villains!—Masters, it is proved already that you are little better than false

knaves; and it will go near to be thought so shortly. How answer you for yourselves?

Con. Marry, sir, we say we are none.

Dogb. A marvellous witty fellow, I assure you; but I will go about with him.—Come you hither, sirrah; a word in your ear, sir; I say to you, it is thought you are false knaves.

Bora. Sir, I say to you, we are none.

Dogb. Well, stand aside.—'Fore Heaven, they are both in a tale: Have you writ down—that they *are none.*

Sexton. Master constable, you go not the way to examine; you must call forth the watch that are their accusers.

Dogb. Yea, marry, that's the eftest way:—Let the watch come forth.—Masters, I charge you, in the prince's name, accuse these men.

Oatcake. This man said, sir, that Don John, the prince's brother, was a villain.

Dogb. Write down—prince John *a villain*:—Why this is flat perjury, to call a prince's brother—*villain.*

Bora. Master constable,—

Dogb. Pray thee, fellow, peace; I do not like thy look, I promise thee.

Sexton. What heard you him say else?

Seacoal. Marry, that he had received a thousand ducats of Don John, for accusing the lady Hero wrongfully.

Dogb. Flat burglary, as ever was committed.

Verg. Yea, by the mass, that it is.

Sexton. What else, fellow?

Oatcake. And that count Claudio did mean, upon his words, to disgrace Hero before the whole assembly, and not marry her.

Dogb. O villain! thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption for this.

Sexton. What else?

Seacoal. This is all.

Sexton. And this is more, masters, than you can deny. Prince John is this morning secretly stolen

away; Hero was in this manner accused, in this very manner refused, and upon the grief of this suddenly died.—Master constable, let these men be bound, and brought to Leonato's; I will go before, and show him their examination. [*Exit.*

Dogb. Come, let them be opinioned.

Verg. Let them be in the hands—

Con. Off, coxcomb!

Dogb. God's my life! where's the sexton? let him write down—the prince's officer, *coxcomb.*—Come, bind them.——Thou naughty varlet!

Con. Away! you are an ass, you are an ass.

Dogb. Dost thou not suspect my place? Dost thou not suspect my years?—O that he were here to write me down—*an ass!*—but, masters, remember, that I am *an ass;* though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am *an ass.*—No, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be proved upon thee by good witness. I am a wise fellow; and, which is more, an officer; and, which is more, a householder: and, which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any is in Messina; and one that knows the law, go to; and a rich fellow enough, go to; and a fellow that hath had losses; and one that hath two gowns, and every thing handsome about him. Bring him away. O, that I had been writ down—*an ass.* [*Exeunt.*

SCENE 2. Leonato's *Garden.*

Enter LEONATO *and* ANTONIO.

Antonio.

IF you go on thus, you will kill yourself;
And 'tis not wisdom, thus to second grief
Against yourself.

Leon. Give not me counsel;
Nor let no comforter delight mine ear,
But such a one whose wrongs do suit with mine.

Bring me a father, that so loved his child,
Whose joy of her is overwhelm'd like mine
And bid him speak to me of patience;
But there is no such man: For, brother, men
Can counsel, and speak comfort to that grief
Which they themselves not feel; but, tasting it,
Their counsel turns to passion.
No, no; 'tis all men's office to speak patience
To those that wring under the load of sorrow:
But no man's virtue, nor sufficiency,
To be so moral, when he shall endure
The like himself. Therefore give me no counsel:
My griefs cry louder than advertisement.

Ant. Therein do men from children nothing differ.

Leon. I pray thee, peace! I will be flesh and blood:
For there was never yet philosopher,
That could endure the tooth-ache patiently;
However they have writ the style of gods,
And made a push at chance and sufferance.

Ant. Yet bend not all the harm upon yourself;
Make those, that do offend you, suffer too.

Leon. There thou speak'st reason: nay, I will do so:
My soul doth tell me, Hero is belied,
And that shall Claudio know, so shall the prince,
And all of them, that thus dishonour her.

Ant. Here comes the prince, and Claudio, hastily.

Enter DON PEDRO *and* CLAUDIO.

D. Pedro. Good den, good den.

Claud. Good day to both of you.

Leon. Hear you, my lords,—

D. Pedro. We have some haste, Leonato.

Leon. Some haste, my lord!—well, fare you well, my lord:—
Are you so hasty now?—well, all is one.

D. Pedro. Nay, do not quarrel with us, good old man.

Ant. If he could right himself with quarrelling,
Some of us would lie low.

Claud. Who wrongs him?
Leon. *Who!*
Marry, thou dost wrong me; thou dissembler, thou;—
Nay, never lay thy hand upon thy sword,
I fear thee not.
Claud. Marry, beshrew my hand,
If it should give your age such cause of fear:
In faith, my hand meant nothing to my sword.
Leon. Tush, tush, man, never fleer and jest at me:
I speak not like a dotard, nor a fool;
As, under privilege of age, to brag
What I have done being young, or what would do,
Were I not old. Know, Claudio, to thy head,
Thou hast so wrong'd mine innocent child and me,
That I am forc'd to lay my reverence by;
And, with grey hairs, and bruise of many days,
Do challenge thee to trial of a man.
I say, thou hast belied mine innocent child;
Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart,
And she lies buried with her ancestors:
O! in a tomb where never scandal slept,
Save this of her's fram'd by thy villainy.
Claud. My villainy!
Leon. Thine, Claudio; thine I say.
D. Pedro. You say not right, old man.
Leon. My lord, my lord,
I'll prove it on his body, if he dare;
Despite his nice fence, and his active practice,
His May of youth, and bloom of lustyhood.
Claud. Away! I will not have to do with you.
Leon. Canst thou so daff me? Thou hast kill'd my child;
It thou kill'st me, boy, thou shalt kill a man.
Ant. He shall kill two of us, and men indeed:
But that's no matter; let him kill one first;—
Win me and wear me,—let him answer me,—
Come, follow me, boy! come, sir boy, follow me:
Sir boy, I'll whip you from your foining fence;
Nay, as I am a gentleman, I will.

Leon. Brother,—

Ant. Content yourself: God knows, I lov'd my niece;
And she is dead, slander'd to death by villains;
That dare as well answer a man, indeed,
As I dare take a serpent by the tongue.
Boys, apes, braggàrts, jacks, milksops!—

Leon. Brother Antony,—

Ant. Hold you content; What, man! I know them, yea,
And what they weigh, even to the utmost scruple:
Scambling, out-facing, fashion-mong'ring boys,
That lie, and cog, and flout, deprave and slander,
Go antickly, show outward hideousness,
And speak off half a dozen dangerous words,
How they might hurt their enemies, if they durst,
And this is all.

D. Pedro. Gentlemen both, we will not wake your patience.
My heart is sorry for your daughter's death;
But, on my honour, she was charg'd with nothing
But what was true, and very full of proof.

Leon. My lord, my lord,—

D. Pedro. I will not hear you.

Leon. No!
Come, brother, away:—I will be heard;—

Ant. And shall,
Or some of us will smart for it.

[*Exeunt* LEONATO *and* ANTONIO.

D. Pedro. See, see; here comes the man we went to seek.

Enter BENEDICK.

Claud. Now, Signior! what news?

Bene. Good day, my lord.

D. Pedro. Welcome, Signior: You are almost come to part almost a fray.

Claud. We had like to have had our two noses snapped off with two old men without teeth.

D. Pedro. Leonato and his brother: What think'st thou? Had we fought, I doubt, we should have been too young for them.

Bene. In a false quarrel there is no true valour. I came to seek you both.

Claud. We have been up and down to seek thee; for we are high-proof melancholy, and would fain have it beaten away: Wilt thou use thy wit?

Bene. It is in my scabbard; Shall I draw it?

D. Pedro. Dost thou wear thy wit by thy side?

Claud. Never any did so, though very many have been beside their wit.—I will bid thee draw, as we do the minstrels; draw, to pleasure us.

D. Pedro. As I am an honest man, he looks pale: —Art thou sick, or angry?

Claud. What! courage, man! What though care killed a cat, thou hast mettle enough in thee to kill care.

Bene. Sir, I shall meet your wit in the career, an you charge it against me:—I pray you, choose another subject.

D. Pedro. By this light, he changes more and more; I think, he be angry indeed.

Claud. If he be, he knows how to turn his girdle.

Bene. Shall I speak a word in your ear?

Claud. God bless me from a challenge!

Bene. You are a villain;—I jest not:—I will make it good how you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare:—Do me right, or I will protest your cowardice. You have killed a sweet lady, and her death shall fall heavy on you: Let me hear from you.

Claud. Well, I will meet you, so I may have good cheer.

D. Pedro. What, a feast? a feast?

Claud. I'faith, I thank him; he hath bid me to a calf's head; the which if I do not carve most curiously, say, my knife's naught.

Bene. Sir, your wit ambles well; it goes easily.

D. Pedro. I'll tell thee how Beatrice praised thy wit the other day.

Claud. For the which she wept heartily, and said, she cared not.

D. Pedro. Yea, that she did. But when shall we set the savage bull's horns on the sensible Benedick's head?

Claud. Yea, and text underneath, *Here dwells Benedick the married man?*

Bene. Fare you well, boy! you know my mind; I will leave you now to your gossip-like humour: you break jests as braggarts do their blades, which, God be thanked, hurt not.—My lord, for your many courtesies I thank you: I must discontinue your company: your brother, the bastard, is fled from Messina: you have, among you, killed a sweet and innocent lady: For my lord Lack-beard, there, he and I shall meet; and till then, peace be with him. [*Exit* BENEDICK.

D. Pedro. He is in earnest.

Claud. In most profound earnest; And, I'll warrant you, for the love of Beatrice.

D. Pedro. And hath challenged thee?

Claud. Most sincerely.

D. Pedro. What a pretty thing man is, when he goes in his doublet and hose, and leaves off his wit. Did he not say, my brother was fled?

Enter DOGBERRY, VERGES, *and the* Watch, with CONRADE *and* BORACHIO.

Dogb. Come, you, sir; if justice cannot tame you, she shall ne'er weigh more reasons in her balance: nay, an you be a cursing hypocrite once, you must be looked to.

D. Pedro. How now, two of my brother's men bound! Borachio, one!

Claud. Hearken after their offence, my lord!

D. Pedro. Officers, what offence have these men done?

Dogb. Marry, sir, they have committed false report; moreover, they have spoken untruths; secondarily, they are slanders: sixth and lastly, they have belied a lady; thirdly, they have verified unjust things: and to conclude, they are lying knaves.

D. Pedro. First, I ask thee what they have done; thirdly, I ask thee what's their offence; sixth and lastly, why they are committed; and, to conclude, what you lay to their charge?

Claud. Rightly reasoned, and in his own division.

D. Pedro. Whom have you offended, masters, that you are thus bound to your answer? this learned constable is too cunning to be understood: What's your offence?

Bora. Sweet prince, let me go no further to mine answer; do you hear me, and let this count kill me. I have deceived even your very eyes: what your wisdoms could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light; who, in the night, overheard me confessing to this man, how Don John, your brother, incensed me to slander the lady Hero; how you were brought into the orchard, and saw me court Margaret in Hero's garments; how you disgraced her, when you should marry her. My villainy they have upon record; which I had rather seal with my death than repeat over to my shame: the lady is dead upon mine and my master's false accusation; and, briefly, I desire nothing but the reward of a villain.

D. Pedro. Runs not this speech like iron through your blood?

Claud. I have drunk poison, whiles he utter'd it.

D. Pedro. But did my brother set thee on to this?

Bora. Yea, and paid me richly for the practice of it.

D. Pedro. He is compos'd and fram'd of treachery:—
And fled he is upon this villainy.

Claud. Sweet Hero! now thy image doth appear
In the rare semblance that I loved it first.

Dogb. Come, bring away the plaintiffs; by this

time our Sexton hath reformed Signior Leonato of the matter: And, masters, do not forget to specify, when time and place shall serve, that I am *an ass.*

Verg. Here, here comes master Signior Leonato, and the Sexton too.

Re-enter LEONATO *and* ANTONIO, *with the* Sexton *and* Attendants.

Leon. Which is the villain? Let me see his eyes;
That when I note another man like him,
I may avoid him: Which of these is he?

Bora. If you would know your wronger, look on me.

Leon. Art thou the slave, that with thy breath hast kill'd
Mine innocent child?

Bora. Yea, even I alone.

Leon. No, not so, villain; thou beliest thyself;
Here stand a pair of honourable men,
A third is fled, that had a hand in it.—
I thank you, princes, for my daughter's death;
Record it with your high and worthy deeds;
'Twas bravely done, if you bethink you of it.

Claud. I know not how to pray your patience,
Yet I must speak. Choose your revenge yourself;
Impose me to what penance your invention
Can lay upon my sin: yet sinn'd I not,
But in mistaking.

D. Pedro. By my soul, nor I;
And yet, to satisfy this good old man,
I would bend under any heavy weight
Then he'll enjoin me to.

Leon. I cannot bid you bid my daughter live.
That were impossible; but, I pray you both,
Possess the people in Messina here
How innocent she died: and, if your love
Can labour aught in sad invention,
Hang her an epitaph upon her tomb,
And sing it to her bones; sing it to-night.—

To-morrow morning come you to my house;
And since you could not be my son-in-law,
Be yet my nephew: my brother hath a daughter,
Almost the copy of my child that's dead,
And she alone is heir to both of us;
Give her the right you should have given her cousin,
And so dies my revenge.

Claud. O, noble sir,
Your over-kindness doth wring tears from me!
I do embrace your offer: and dispose
For henceforth of poor Claudio.

Leon. Until to-morrow morning, lords, farewell.

Ant. Farewell, my lords; we look for you to-morrow.

D. Pedro. We will not fail.

Claud. To-night I'll mourn with Hero.

[*Exeunt* DON PEDRO *and* CLAUDIO.

Leon. This naughty man
Shall face to face be brought to Margaret,
Who, I believe, was pact in all this wrong.

Bora. No, by my soul, she was not;
Nor knew not what she did, when she spoke to me;
But always hath been just and virtuous,
In any thing that I do know by her.

Dogb. Moreover, sir (which, indeed, is not under white and black), this plaintiff here, the offender, did call me ass: I beseech you, let it be remembered in his punishment.

Leon. I thank thee for thy care and honest pains.

Dogb. Your worship speaks like a most thankful and reverend youth; and I praise Heaven for you.

Leon. There's for thy pains.

Dogb. Heaven save the foundation!

Leon. Go, I discharge thee of thy prisoner, and I thank thee.

Dogb. I leave an errant knave with your worship; which, I beseech your worship, to correct yourself for the example of others. Heaven keep your worship; I wish your worship well; Heaven restore you to

health: I humbly give you leave to depart; and if a merry meeting may be wished, Heaven prohibit it.—Come, neighbour.

[*Exeunt* DOGBERRY, VERGES, *and* Watch.

Leon. Bring you these fellows on; we'll talk with Margaret,
How her acquaintance grew with this lewd fellow.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter BENEDICK *and* MARGARET.

Bene. Pray thee, sweet mistress Margaret, deserve well at my hands, by helping me to the speech of Beatrice.

Marg. Will you then write me a sonnet in praise of my beauty?

Bene. In so high a style, Margaret, that no man living shall come over it.

Marg. Why, shall I always keep below stairs?

Bene. Thy wit is as quick as the greyhound's mouth, it catches.

Marg. And your's as blunt as the fencer's foils, which hit, but hurt not.

Bene. A most manly wit, Margaret, it will not hurt a woman; and so, I pray thee, call Beatrice.

Marg. Well, I will call Beatrice to you, who, I think, hath legs. [*Exit* MARGARET.

Bene. And therefore will come.

The god of love, [*Singing.*
That sits above,
And knows me, and knows me,
How pitiful I deserve,—

I mean, in singing; but in loving,—Leander the good swimmer, Troilus the first employer of panders, and a whole book full of these quondam carpet-mongers, whose names yet run smoothly in the even road of a blank verse, why, they were never so truly turned over and over as my poor self, in love: Marry, I cannot show it in rhyme; I have tried; I can find out no

rhyme to *lady* but *baby*, an innocent rhyme; for *school*, *fool*, a babbling rhyme; for *scorn*, *horn*, a hard rhyme; very ominous endings: No, I was not born under a rhyming planet, nor I cannot woo in festival terms.—

Enter BEATRICE.

Sweet Beatrice, would'st thou come when I call'd thee?

Beat. Yea, Signior, and depart when you bid me.

Bene. O, stay but till then!

Beat. *Then*, is spoken; fare you well now:—and yet, ere I go, let me go with that I came, which is, with knowing what hath passed between you and Claudio.

Bene. Claudio undergoes my challenge; and either I must shortly hear from him, or I will subscribe him a coward. And, I pray thee now, tell me, for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in love with me?

Beat. For them all together; which maintained so politick a state of evil, that they will not admit any good part to intermingle with them. But for which of my good parts did you first suffer love for me?

Bene. *Suffer love;* a good epithet! I do suffer love, indeed, for I love thee against my will.

Beat. In spite of your heart, I think; alas! poor heart! If you spite it for my sake, I will spite it for yours; for I will never love that which my friend hates.

Bene. Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably.

Beat. It appears not in this confession: there's not one wise man among twenty that will praise himself.

Bene. An old, an old instance, Beatrice, that lived in the time of good neighbours: if a man do not erect in this age his own tomb ere he dies, he shall live no longer in a monument, than the bell rings, and the widow weeps; and now tell me, how doth your cousin?

Beat. Very ill.

Bene. And how do you?

Beat. Very ill too.

Bene. Serve God, love me, and mend. There will I leave you too, for here comes one in haste.

Enter URSULA.

Urs. Madam, you must come to your uncle; yonder's old coil at home: it is proved, my lady Hero hath been falsely accused, the Prince and Claudio mightily abused; and Don John is the author of all, who is fled and gone.

Beat. Will you go hear this news, Signior?

Bene. I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be buried in thy eyes; and moreover, I will go with thee to thy uncle's. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE 3. *The Monument of Leonato—within the Church.*

Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, *and* Attendants, *with Musick and Tapers.*

HYMN.

DARDON, Goddess of the night,
Those that slew thy virgin knight;
For the which, with songs of woe,
Round about her tomb they go.

Midnight, assist our moan;
Help us to sigh and groan,
Heavily, heavily:
Graves, yawn, and yield your dead,
Till death be uttered,
Heavily, heavily.

Claud. Is this the monument of Leonato?

Atten. It is, my lord.

Claud. [*Reads from a scroll.*]

" Done to death by slanderous tongues
Was the Hero that here lies:
Death, in guerdon of her wrongs,
Gives her fame which never dies.
So the life, that died with shame,
Lives in death with glorious fame.

Hang thou there upon the tomb,
Praising her when I am dumb.—
Now, unto thy bones good night!
Yearly will I do this rite.

D. Pedro. Good morrow, masters; put your torches out:
The wolves have prey'd; and look, the gentle day,
Before the wheels of Phœbus, round about
Dapples the drowsy east with spots of gray:
Thanks to you all, and leave us; fare you well.

Claud. Good morrow, masters; each his several way.

D. Pedro. Come, let us hence, and put on other weeds;
And then to Leonato's we will go.

Claud. And, Hymen, now with luckier issue speed's,
Than this, for whom we render'd up this woe!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE 4. *A Hall in* Leonato's *House.*

Enter LEONATO, ANTONIO, BENEDICK, BEATRICE, URSULA, FRIAR, HERO, *and others.*

Friar.

DID I not tell you she was innocent?

Leon. So are the prince and Claudio, who accus'd her
Upon the error that you heard debated:
But Margaret was in some fault for this;
Although against her will, as it appears
In the true course of all the question.

Ant. Well, I am glad that all things sort so well.

Bene. And so am I, being else by faith enforc'd
To call young Claudio to a reckoning for it.

Leon. Well, daughter, and you gentlewomen all,
Withdraw into a chamber by yourselves;
And, when I send for you, come hither mask'd:
The prince and Claudio promis'd by this hour
To visit me.—You know your office, brother;
You must be father to your brother's daughter,
And give her to young Claudio.

[*Exeunt* HERO, BEATRICE, *and* Ladies.

Ant. Which I will do with confirm'd countenance.

Bene. Friar, I must entreat your pains, I think.

Friar. To do what, Signior?

Bene. To bind me, or undo me, one of them.—
Signior Leonato, truth it is, good Signior,
Your niece regards me with an eye of favour.

Leon. That eye my daughter lent her; 'Tis most true.

Bene. And I do with an eye of love requite her.

Leon. The sight whereof, I think, you had from me,
From Claudio, and the prince: But what's your will?

Bene. Your answer, sir, is enigmatical:
But, for my will, my will is, your good will

May stand with ours, this day to be conjoin'd
In the state of honourable marriage;—
In which, good friar, I shall desire your help.
Leon. My heart is with your liking.
Friar. And my help.
Here comes the prince, and Claudio.

Enter DON PEDRO *and* CLAUDIO, *with* Attendants.

D. Pedro. Good morrow to this fair assembly.
Leon. Good morrow, Prince; good morrow, Claudio.
We here attend you. Are you yet determin'd
To-day to marry with my brother's daughter?
Claud. I'll hold my mind, were she an Ethiope.
Leon. Call her forth, brother, here's the friar ready.
[*Exit* ANTONIO.
D. Pedro. Good morrow, Benedick: Why, what's the matter,
That you have such a February face,
So full of frost, of storm, and cloudiness?

Re-enter ANTONIO, *with* HERO, BEATRICE, *and the* Ladies *veiled.*

Claud. Which is the lady I must seize upon?
Ant. This same is she, and I do give you her.
Claud. Why, then she's mine: Sweet, let me see your face.
Leon. No, that you shall not, till you take her hand
Before this friar, and swear to marry her.
Claud. Give me your hand before this holy friar;
I am your husband, if you like of me.
Hero. And when I lived, I was your other wife:
[*Unveiling.*
And when you loved, you were my other husband.
Claud. Another Hero!
Hero. Nothing certainer:
One Hero died defil'd; but I do live,
And, surely as I live, I am a maid.
D. Pedro. The former Hero! Hero that is dead!

Leon. She died, my lord, but whiles her slander lived.

Friar. All this amazement can I qualify;
When, after that the holy rites are ended,
I'll tell you largely of fair Hero's death:
Mean time, let wonder seem familiar,
And to the chapel let us presently.

Bene. Soft and fair, friar.—Which is Beatrice?

Beat. I answer to that name. [*Unveiling.*] What is your will?

Bene. Do not you love me?

Beat. Why no, no more than reason.

Bene. Why, then your uncle, and the prince, and Claudio,
Have been deceiv'd;—for they did swear you did.

Beat. Do not you love me?

Bene. Troth no, no more than reason.

Beat. Why, then my cousin, Margaret, and Ursula,
Are much deceiv'd; for they did swear you did.

Bene. They swore that you were almost sick for me.

Beat. They swore that you were well-nigh dead for me.

Bene. 'Tis no such matter:—Then you do not love me?

Beat. No, truly, but in friendly recompense.

Leon. Come, cousin, I am sure you love the gentleman.

Claud. And I'll be sworn upon't, that he loves her;
For here's a paper, written in his hand,
A halting sonnet of his own pure brain,
Fashion'd to Beatrice.

Hero. And here's another,
Writ in my cousin's hand, stolen from her pocket,
Containing her affection unto Benedick.

Bene. A miracle! here's our own hands against our hearts!—Come, I will have thee; but, by this light, I take thee for pity.

Beat. I would not deny you; but, by this good day, I yield upon great persuasion; and, partly, to

save your life, for I was told you were in a consumption.

Bene. Peace, I will stop your mouth.

[*Kissing her.*

D. Pedro. How dost thou, *Benedick the married man?*

Bene. I'll tell thee what, prince; a college of wit-crackers cannot flout me out of my humour: Dost thou think, I care for a satire, or an epigram? No: if a man will be beaten with brains, a' shall wear nothing handsome about him: In brief, since I do purpose to marry, I will think nothing to any purpose that the world can say against it; and therefore never flout at me for what I have said against it; for man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion.—For thy part, Claudio, I did think to have beaten thee; but in that thou art like to be my kinsman, live unbruised, and love my cousin.

Claud. I had well hoped, thou wouldst have denied Beatrice, that I might have cudgelled thee out of thy single life.

Bene. Come, come, we are friends:—let's have a dance ere we are married, that we may lighten our own hearts, and our wives' heels.

Leon. We'll have dancing afterwards.

Bene. First, o' my word; therefore play, musick.—Prince, art thou sad; get thee a wife, get thee a wife: there is no staff more reverend than one tipped with horn. Strike up, pipers. [*Dance.*

CURTAIN.

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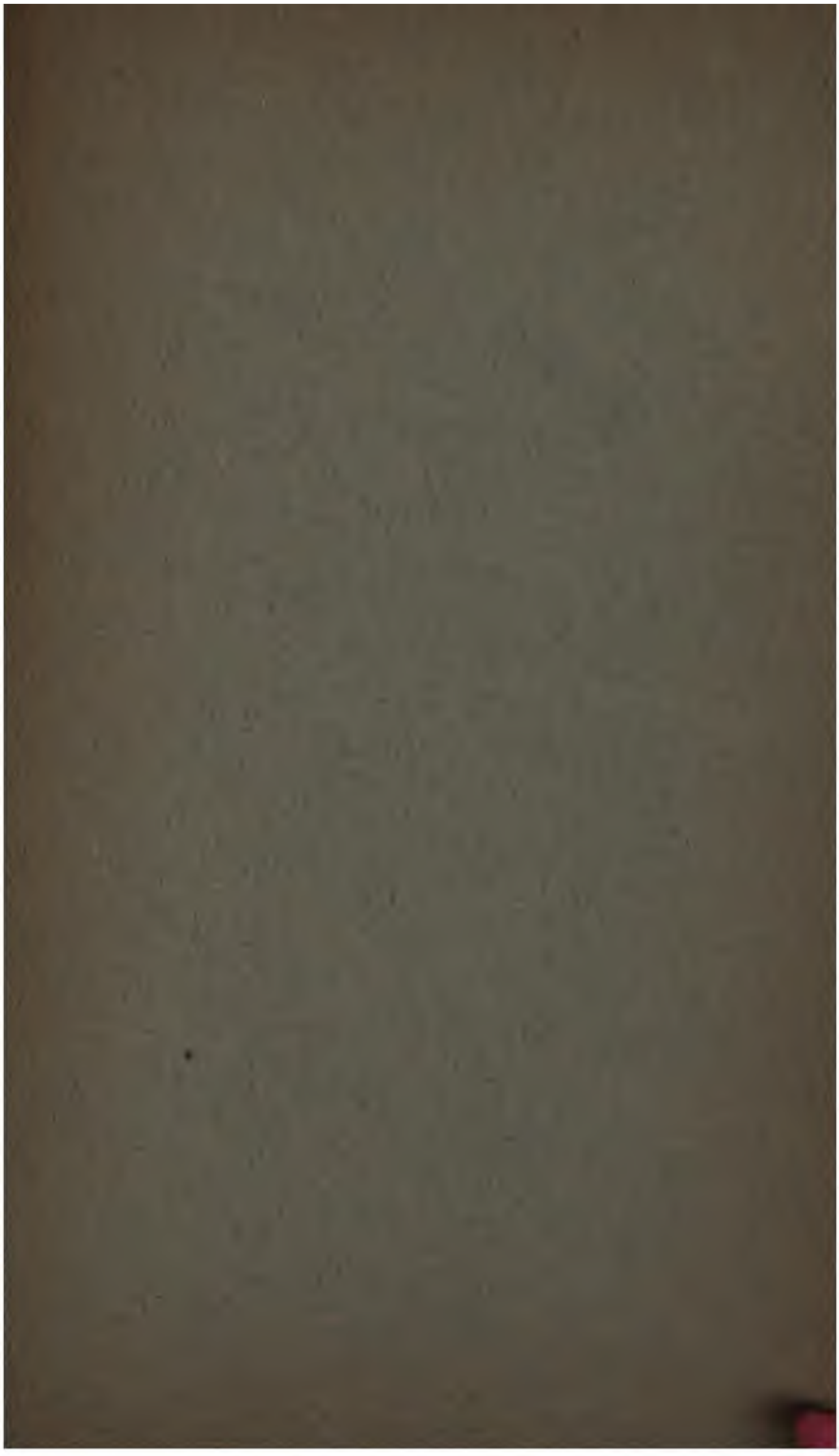

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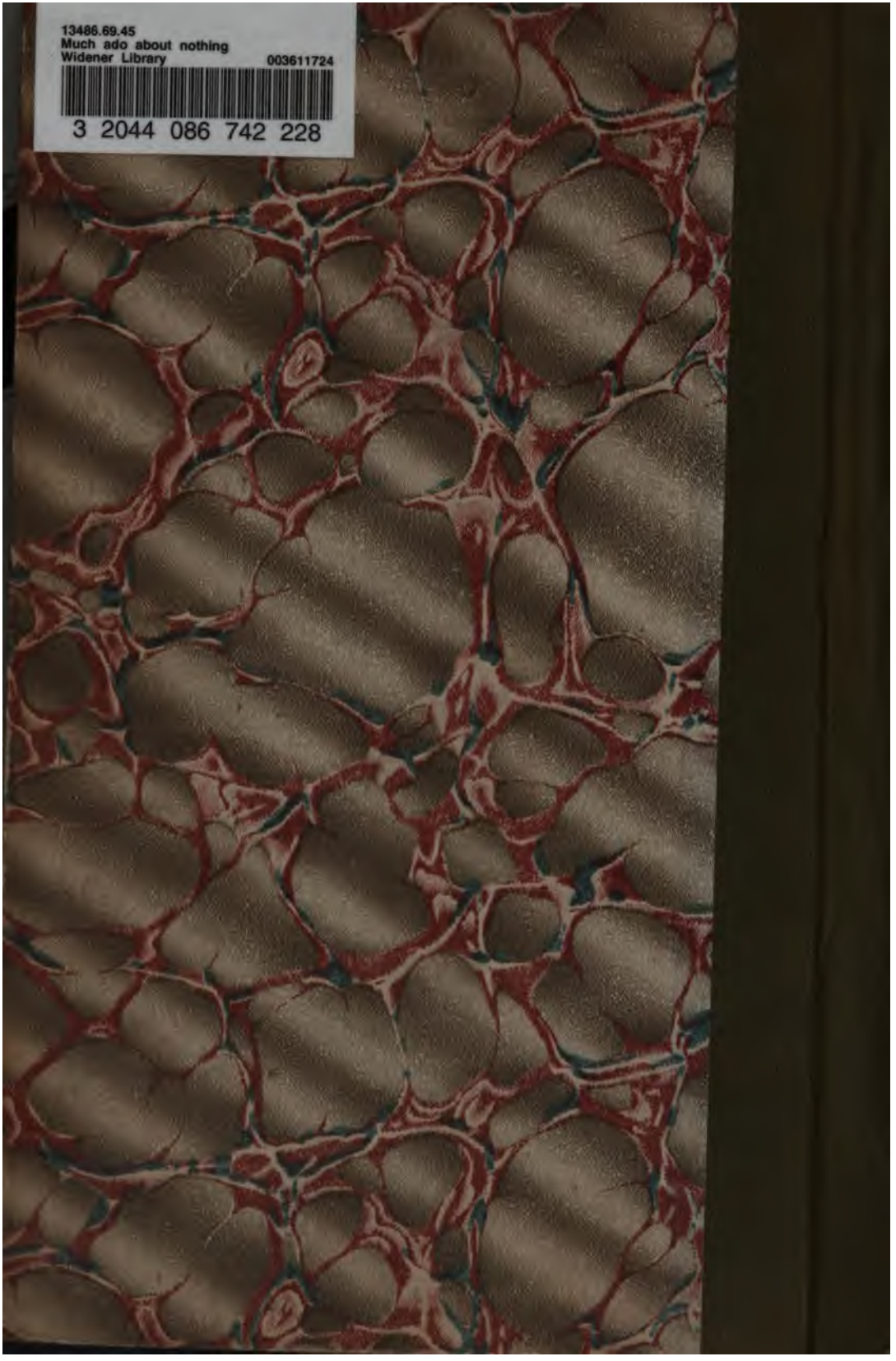
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